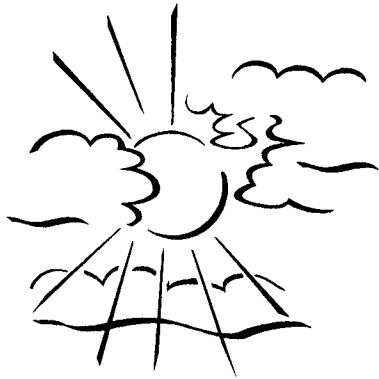


***Department
of
Human
Services***

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
(517) 373-7394



*Important story at this spot

Articles in Today's Clips

Monday, August 15, 2005

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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Rulings Trim Legal Leeway Given Medicaid Recipients

By ROBERT PEAR

The New York Times

Published: August 15, 2005

WASHINGTON, Aug. 14 - In a series of rulings, federal judges are limiting the ability of poor people to turn to the courts to fight for Medicaid benefits to which they believe they are entitled. The judges, following guidance from the Supreme Court, are ruling that Medicaid recipients cannot use the courts to enforce a provision of the law that says they should have the same access to health care services as "the general population."

While the federal courts are still full of Medicaid litigation, it is proving more difficult for beneficiaries to prevail.

Medicaid provides health insurance to more than 50 million low-income people. The court decisions are raising questions about what it means to have health insurance, if the terms of such coverage cannot be enforced.

The rulings, in more than a dozen cases, affect millions of people and involve a wide range of services like nursing home care, home health visits and preventive care for children.

In a typical case, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in San Francisco, said this month that Medicaid recipients could not enforce the provision of the Medicaid law that promises them "equal access" to care and services. In establishing this guarantee, the court said, "Congress did not unambiguously create an individually enforceable right."

It is not enough for Medicaid recipients to show "merely a violation of federal law or the denial of a benefit," the court said. In addition, it said, plaintiffs must show that Congress clearly intended to allow individuals to go to court to enforce the law.

In the California case, *Sanchez v. Johnson*, the court found no evidence of such intent.

Sara Rosenbaum, a professor of health law and policy at George Washington University, said:

"The idea of Medicaid as an enforceable entitlement is hanging by a thread. Some of Medicaid's most important provisions cannot be enforced. Increasingly, the courts are saying, 'Don't come to us any more unless you can show that you have an absolutely crystal-clear right.'"

The issue is technical but critically important: whether individuals can enforce the Medicaid law or other statutes that provide benefits to millions of Americans.

The Supreme Court's latest pronouncement came in 2002. In general, said Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, a federal law cannot be enforced through a private lawsuit "unless Congress speaks with a clear voice and manifests an unambiguous intent to confer individual rights." Before that decision, federal judges had held that Medicaid recipients and health care providers could sue to enforce many provisions of the Medicaid law. But lower courts have reconsidered those rulings in light of the Supreme Court's admonition that they should be reluctant to infer individually enforceable rights where Congress did not explicitly create such rights.

John G. Roberts Jr., President Bush's nominee for the Supreme Court, was an early advocate for that point of view, long before the recent trend emerged. He endorsed it in a memorandum in 1982, as a 27-year-old aide to Attorney General William French Smith. Since then, Mr. Roberts has been involved in several of the most important Supreme Court cases limiting the use of private lawsuits to enforce federal statutes.

At issue is the meaning of a 19th-century civil rights law known as Section 1983. The law allows individuals to sue state officials who violate rights secured by federal law or the federal Constitution. For decades, courts have allowed use of this law to enforce rights that have nothing to do with traditional civil rights.

But Lauren K. Saunders, a lawyer at the National Senior Citizens Law Center, an advocacy group for low-income elderly people, said, "In the last few years, the Supreme Court has made the test for finding a federal right so stringent that it has become extremely difficult to meet." Increasingly, Ms. Saunders said, "the Supreme Court is looking for magic words - 'rights-creating language' - which Congress never knew it needed to use when these statutes were passed."

Jane Perkins, who represents Medicaid recipients as a lawyer at the National Health Law Program, said, "It has become more difficult for Medicaid recipients to get their day in court."

In Utah, a federal district judge dismissed claims filed by people with disabilities who said they had been improperly denied care under Medicaid. "Plaintiffs do not have a private right of action to enforce the Medicaid Act," the judge declared, citing the stringent test set by the Supreme Court.

People denied coverage or benefits may be able to pursue their claims before a state hearing officer. But many protections of the Medicaid law cannot be enforced in that way.

Since 1990, hospitals, nursing homes and other health care providers have won dozens of lawsuits requiring states to increase Medicaid payments. But their ability to pursue such claims is now in doubt.

In 1996, the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, in Boston, said that home care providers could sue state officials in Massachusetts, under Section 1983, to challenge cuts in their Medicaid rates. But the court reversed itself last year, saying, "The Supreme Court recently closed that door."

The Supreme Court ruling came in a case in which Mr. Roberts, as a lawyer at Hogan & Hartson, had argued that individuals had no right to enforce another federal law, which requires schools to protect the privacy of student records.

The name of that law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, suggests that Congress thought it was creating some sort of right. But Mr. Roberts told the Supreme Court, "No rights are conferred under this statute." The court agreed, in a 7-to-2 decision written by Chief Justice Rehnquist, for whom Mr. Roberts was once a law clerk.

AIDS FIGHT: Woeful gaps remain in prevention programs

August 15, 2005

Former President Bill Clinton might have felt a pang of conscience when he recently called on members of the National Association of Black Journalists to promote greater awareness of the AIDS epidemic. Clinton has said he regrets not doing more as president to fight AIDS. In his second term, Clinton banned federal funds for needle exchange programs for drug addicts, even though he acknowledged that they helped saved lives by preventing the spread of this deadly disease.

Nevertheless, as media coverage of the U.S. AIDS crisis has waned and government support of prevention programs has dropped, Clinton was right on point. This incurable disease is entirely preventable -- if people have the right information and act on it.

The fight against AIDS belongs to everyone, but Clinton's remarks to black journalists carried a special meaning. African-American communities now suffer most from this disease. In Michigan, for example, Africans Americans make up 12% of the population but roughly 60% of the estimated 16,200 HIV and AIDS cases. In metro Detroit, infection rates are seven times higher for blacks than for whites, and 17 times higher for black women than for white women. Nationwide, an estimated 30% of young black gay men carry the AIDS virus. Too often, their own communities and churches isolate them and fail to provide support networks that would promote safer sex and testing.

State, federal and local governments, which have cut funding for AIDS prevention programs, must do more. But the community and media also have a responsibility to spread the word about AIDS and how to prevent it.

Indifference, ignorance and denial will mean more people living with, and dying from, a disease that information and awareness can easily prevent.

August 12, 2005

TAXES, MEDICAID, ENERGY AMONG FOCUS AT N.C.S.L. MEETING

An estimated 7,000 state legislators, staff and lobbyists will meet in Seattle, Washington next week during the annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures with an agenda loaded with sessions on taxes, Medicaid and welfare reform, and energy and technology issues along with several discussions on improving the overall legislative image.

Officials will spend a lot of time on taxing and financing issues such as creation of the streamlined sales tax to cover catalog and Internet retail sales (a day-long meeting is planned on the issue for Monday), but will also look at issues such as a taxpayers' bill of rights initiative.

Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform and one of the best known and most influential conservative activists working in Washington, D.C., will participate in the discussion on Thursday on the taxpayers bill of rights.

Officials will also raise alarms about what they said is the changing nature of federalism, with Congress and the president making more demands of the states. The group is singling out new legislation that will effectively require the states to make driver's licenses and state identification cards the de facto national identity card.

Other speakers at the conference will include Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, the world's richest man and best-known Seattle resident, aside from Mariners all-star hitter Ichiro Suzuki. Mr. Gates has several times spoken to the National Governors Association meetings, and his wife Melinda has spoken to the NCSL, but this is the first time he has addressed the legislative conference.

Rep. Scott Hummel (R-DeWitt), chair of the House Appropriations Committee, will also chair a session on Thursday on the Price of Government – the exercise lawmakers have gone through to rationalize the 2005-06 budget – which will also include Peter Hutchinson, author of the book that has sparked interest in the process.

In fact, as many as 22 Michigan legislators are registered for the meeting, an unusually high number of legislators from the Great Lakes State to attend an NCSL conference.

Senate Majority Floor Leader Bev Hammerstrom (R-Temperance) will also participate in a session on women in legislative power positions.

The conference is crammed with literally hundreds of meetings on a variety of subjects. Taxes, as always, will be a key focus with sessions on collecting them, limiting them, defining discriminatory taxes and other aspects of public finance held throughout the week.

Because Seattle and its relationship with Microsoft has made the city one of the primary hubs of the worldwide high tech industry, a number of sessions will focus on technology, including reforms of telecommunications laws, expansion of wireless technology over local areas (something Oakland County is now attempting to implement).

Energy issues, with oil prices now at their highest levels in history, will also be the focus of a number of sessions, particularly efforts to improve the nation's electric grid as well as sessions on alternative fuel sources, such as biodiesel.

Education will also be a highlight, with a particular emphasis on financing higher education.

There will also be several sessions aimed at building legislative collegiality and improving legislative image. One session will tell lawmakers how to prepare for an interview (but so far no journalists are planned to participate in that session), another will talk about rebuilding fences with legislative colleagues after a candidate has run for office blaming the legislature.

Also from the Senate registered at the meeting are Sen. Ray Basham (D-Taylor) Sen. Deborah Cherry (D-Burton), Sen. Mike Goschka (R-Brant), Sen. Bill Hardiman (R-Kentwood), and Sen. Buzz Thomas (D-Detroit).

From the House also attending are Majority Floor Leader Chris Ward (R-Brighton), Rep. Glenn Anderson (D-Westland), Rep. Rich Brown (D-Bessemer), Rep. Brenda Clack (D-Flint), Rep. David Farnat (R-Fruitport), Rep. Kevin Green (R-Wyoming), Rep. Jack Hoogendyk (R-Portage), Rep. Hoon-Yung Hopgood (D-Taylor), Rep. Roger Kahn (R-Saginaw Township), Rep. Kathleen Law (R-West Bloomfield), Rep. Alexander Lipsey (D-Kalamazoo), Rep. Gary Newell (R-Saranac), Rep. Tom Pearce (R-Rockford) and Rep. Clarence Phillips (D-Pontiac).

Plan to provide health insurance

Thursday, August 11, 2005

By Brad Florybflory@citpat.com -- 768-4925

Working people with no health insurance will soon have a new way to get medical coverage in Jackson County.

Jackson Care, as the plan is called, is aimed at small businesses that do not provide health benefits. Coverage will begin Oct. 1 with sign-up starting in September.

Created by the not-for-profit Jackson Health Plan group, Jackson Care will provide medical coverage at a relatively modest cost split three ways between employers, employees and a government subsidy.

"We have to address the small businesses. They're getting killed by the (insurance) rates. And many of them don't offer insurance," said Del Malloch, a consultant hired to develop and implement Jackson Care.

Health coverage will cost about \$200 per month for individuals but the employee's share will be less than \$70 a month, Malloch said.

Doctor visits, hospital stays and prescription drugs will be covered, with co-pay fees to the patient.

"It is a great value for the money," Malloch said.

Federal money funneled through Jackson Health Plan will pay slightly more than one third of the cost. Remaining costs will be evenly split between employers and employees.

"I think it is worth a try in Jackson County because we have a lot of small businesses," said Randy Treacher, deputy Jackson County administrator and chairman of the Jackson Health Plan board.

"I am not sure it is a product that will work everywhere, but I think it can work in Jackson County."

No company will be eligible to offer Jackson Care coverage unless it has provided no health insurance for at least a year. Companies must have four to 20 employees willing to participate. Initially, Jackson Care has spots for 100 people.

"It is a small start," said Molly Kaser, director of the Center for Family Health and member of the Jackson Health Plan board. "But we want to start small, do it right and grow."

Treacher said he would like to see Jackson Care grow to cover 2,000 or more workers.

Backers hope companies see a financial incentive to offer Jackson Care.

"People don't go to work just for wages," Treacher said. "They go to work for benefits, too."

"Employers would absorb this small cost as a way to retain good workers," Kaser said.

Aug 15, 12:35 PM EDT

Grand Rapids boy, 6, accidentally shoots 4- year-old sister

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (AP) -- Police said they were trying to figure out how a 6-year-old boy got hold of a handgun and accidentally shot his 4-year-old sister in the upper leg.

Shania Pagan was listed in fair condition Monday at DeVos Children's Hospital, police said.

She and her brother, Steven Pagan, were playing in an upstairs bedroom of their apartment Sunday when the shooting occurred, said police Sgt. Chris Postma. The girl underwent surgery overnight and likely will need more operations to recover, he said.

She's going to be hospitalized quite a while," Postma told The Grand Rapids Press for a Monday story.

The children were home with their mother,

Susana Pagan, 26, when the shot was fired shortly before 5:30 p.m.

Detectives were trying to determine who owns the gun and why it was left in a place where a child could reach it, Postma said.

Information from: The Grand Rapids Press,
<http://www.mlive.com/grpress>

Portage investigation spanned nine months

Monday, August 15, 2005

Kalamazoo Gazette

Criminal charges against a Kalamazoo Public Safety officer who killed himself Friday involved alleged sexual activity with two girls, authorities said.

A warrant issued Thursday by Calhoun County Prosecutor John Hallacy charged Matthew Hallman, 40, of Portage, with four counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, one count of second-degree criminal sexual conduct involving a person under the age of 13 and one count of third-degree criminal sexual conduct.

The charges were the culmination of a nine-month investigation by the Portage Police Department.

Hallacy's office had been handling the case against Hallman since March at the request of the Kalamazoo County prosecutor and the state Attorney General's Office because the case involved a Kalamazoo police officer, court documents state.

Hallman was also facing a charge of accosting children for immoral purposes, involving the same alleged victims.

The incidents reportedly took place between May 2003 and October 2004, according to the arrest warrant.

Hallman, a road-patrol officer and 13-year veteran of the Public Safety Department, was found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound at 12:45 p.m. Friday in the department's Bryant Street station, police said.

Department of Public Safety Chief Dan Weston said Friday an autopsy was to be performed to determine the cause of death. The Gazette was unable to reach Weston for comment this morning, and autopsy results were not available.

Portage police Lt. Don Butler said Portage authorities initiated their investigation on Oct. 30, 2004, and over the nine months found that "there was probable cause to seek charges on Mr. Hallman."

Butler declined to disclose any specific details of the investigation this morning.

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Editorial

The Detroit Free Press

Education, not bill, best to prevent child deaths

August 13, 2005

An increase in the number of children dying horrible deaths in sweltering cars has generated interest in attempting to enact a law in Michigan to criminalize the act of leaving a child alone in a vehicle. But state legislators should not rush to support House Bill 4738, an attempt to legislate common sense.

The well-intentioned but vague bill, a proposed amendment to Michigan's child abuse statute, would make it a felony, punishable by up to a year in prison, to leave a child in a hot car, whether or not the child suffers any ill effects.

Sponsored by state Rep. William Van Regenmorter, R-Hudsonville, the bill is backed by the state's prosecuting attorneys, who see it plugging a hole in the law.

If you're going to use a law to send a message, that message had better be clear, and this bill isn't, at least not yet. The state might be better off investing its energy in an education campaign to make sure parents know the inherent dangers of leaving children alone, especially in a car. The tragedy of a child dying under such circumstances is at once outrageous and heartbreaking. Parents or caregivers whose poor or impaired judgment has resulted in such deaths deserve to be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

But there are obvious issues of intent and willfulness involved. The legal system has an adequate range of options to address them, from murder to negligent homicide, child neglect, abuse and abandonment. The Van Regenmorter bill would make it a crime to "intentionally commit an act likely to cause physical harm to a child, regardless of whether physical harm results." That sounds meaningful, but it still involves a judgment call on the part of law enforcement, same as now.

Is a walk up to the ATM with a sleeping baby 10 feet away in the car likely to cause harm? How far away is too far? How long is too long to leave a child? How hot is too hot in the car, or how cold is too cold? If the prosecutors who have to bring charges in the aftermath of these tragedies believe the law is inadequate, they ought to be heard.

There may be a way to develop a specific statute that will do what everyone wants to do, protect the children. But the Van Regenmorter bill isn't it -- and in the meantime, a public-education crusade might go a long way toward solving this problem.

Rodeos set violent example for our children

FLINT JOURNAL LETTER TO THE EDITOR

BURTON

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Monday, August 15, 2005

JOURNAL READER

It is ironic that the Flint area is trying to cut down on violence and crime, yet we allow rodeos in our community. Studies show that there is a strong link between violence toward animals and violence toward humans.

As a former educator with the Genesee County Humane Society, my job was to teach schoolchildren about humane treatment of animals. Rodeos are undoing this work. Grown men inflicting pain on animals teaches our children disrespect for life and tolerance for violence. Bull riding teaches children that we can harass a docile animal into behaving aggressively. Calf roping, in which animals are violently roped to the ground and all too often critically or fatally injured, shows children that harming animals for entertainment is perfectly fine. Presenting rodeo as a form of entertainment sends the wrong message to our impressionable children.

Mary Hunt
Burton

Michigan Report

August 12, 2005

NO COMPLAINTS YET ON “PROTECT MI CHILDREN” REGISTRY

A slight glitch in the language of the Children’s Registry Protection Act means that although 3,035 email addresses are in the registry, no complaints have been filed yet against spammers.

The registry, created in late July, was designed to punish individuals or companies that send junk mail to e-mail accounts that children have access to. In addition to the addresses already in the registry, five domain names have been added that likely belong to schools.

Under the act establishing the registry, any company that sends a message to an address on the registry is guilty of a misdemeanor the first time and a felony for subsequent offenses. Companies that send bulk messages are required to pay a monthly fee to scrub their list of any addresses found on the registry. Money raised from that fee is used to administer the registry, which is run by the Public Service Commission.

The Department of Attorney General said it has not seen any complaints yet, though spokeswoman Allison Pierce said the office has received calls from providers asking if they are safe to send out mail. Among the e-mail advertisement prohibited to those on the list are pornography, alcohol, tobacco, medications, illegal drugs, firearms and fireworks.

“We knew from the very beginning that we weren’t going to stop spam altogether,” said Sen. Mike Bishop (R-Rochester). “I’ve heard a lot of people who said this won’t work, but I’ve also heard from people who are afraid to send out spam emails.”

Mr. Bishop said the law does not violate the U.S. CAN-SPAM Act, which prevents states from passing anti-spam legislation. He said he turned in a bill request yesterday to address the problems, which he described as purely technical because the registry is treading new ground.

Some have raised an issue with the fact that legitimate bulk senders will be in trouble under the law. The wording prohibits an email sender from sending a message that directly or indirectly advertises or links to a place where a minor can buy or view goods illegal to them, such as pornography and alcohol. Mr. Bishop said that since most legitimate bulk-emails are opt-in – meaning people choose to receive them – they would be protected.

“There is a real hesitancy to come into Michigan right now and spam,” he added.

Once the complaint process is fixed, complaints can be brought to the attorney general via the website or as a civil suit filed by the parents. Adults can add their email to the list as well but those addresses can’t be the subject of a state investigation or suit.

State employees and Unspam Registry Services, which built the list, do not have authorization to view the e-mails on the list.

Program helps youth transition out of foster care

*By OLIVIA COBISKEY Staff writer
Friday, August 12, 2005
Holland Sentinel*

Young adults "age out" of Michigan's foster care system at age 18 every day, and without the skills to be self-sufficient are in danger of becoming tomorrow's homeless.

Christina, 17, who asked that her last name not be used, entered the state's foster care system more than four years ago.

"Being in my senior year knowing that I'm going to be alone -- it's hard not having any parents out there," said Christina, who attends Black River Public School in Holland.

However, Christina recently found the Youth in Transition program, a federally funded program to help foster care youth make the transition into adulthood.

Susan Bailey-Carman, director of the Allegan County Department of Human Services, said at least 10 youths age 14 to 19 leave the system in Allegan County each year. Her department's goal is to make sure they have the skills to live independently.

The county received \$17,000 from the Michigan's Youth in Transition program this year -- \$4,000 less than it was expecting.

"What I do is make sure the kids know what services are available," said Kendra Spanjer, an Allegan County juvenile justice specialist and the youth in transition coordinator.

Spanjer said she has between three and 15 area youths in the program at a time who attend bi-monthly classes designed to teach independent living skills. The program offers youth educational training vouchers, stipends that can be used for college tuition, housing assistance, life skills training and other tools to achieve self-sufficiency.

Another program participant, Leigh Anne, 18, of Kalamazoo, agreed. She said the program helped her pay for things other teens might expect their parents to pay for, such as prom dresses and senior pictures.

Both young women are hoping to live on their own soon. And although the program provides housing assistance -- towels, pots and pans, dishes -- there isn't money available to help them with their first apartment or car.

"It's been a long, stressful, hard road these last couple of years but if I had it all to do over again, I know I would because I wouldn't be the same person I am today," Christina said.

Contact Olivia Cobiskey at olivia.cobiskey@hollandsentinel.com or (616) 546-4264.

Monday, August 15, 2005

Battle Creek Enquirer

Foster parent touched many lives

Sadie Whitehead, a pillar of the Battle Creek community, passed away July 27. Although the Enquirer printed an obituary, some important information regarding her life was not included. Sadie became a licensed foster parent for the Calhoun County Department of Human Services in 1988 after transferring her license from Calhoun County Juvenile Court, where she had been licensed since 1974. Sadie's concern for children, however, goes back much further than 1974. For years, Sadie was a person whom children would turn to for comfort, love and to find someone who would tell them they were worthwhile. Sadie spent years encouraging children to make good decisions and told them that if they worked hard, stayed out of trouble and asked for help when they needed it, good things would happen for them.

As a foster parent, Sadie was also a support to many social workers looking for homes for children in trouble. Sadie often took children in for a day or for much longer, whatever a child needed. Never one to say "no" to a prospective placement, Sadie believed that all children had something wonderful to offer and should be given a chance at a safe home.

Asked why she became a foster parent, Sadie once said she "just loved children and wanted to have the chance to do something good for someone else." Sadie did "good" for many years by caring for our community's most vulnerable citizens, respecting their birth parents who had their own troubles, and working closely with social workers who were charged with ensuring that children returned home only when it was safe to do so.

Sadie touched many more lives in the community than we will ever know. It's been said before, but thanks again to Sadie and especially to her family for sharing her with us for all these years.

Sandy Milner
Bellevue



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

N e w s R e l e a s e

**Contact: Stepheni Schlinker or
 Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394**

Michigan Department of Human Services Summarily Suspends the Adult Foster Care Family Home License of Margaret Garrison

August 15, 2005

The Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of Children and Adult Licensing issued an order of summary suspension and notice of intent to revoke the license of Bay County adult foster care family home provider Margaret Garrison, Garrison AFC, 991 Carter, Linwood, Michigan. This action resulted from a recent investigation of a complaint of the adult foster care family home.

The August 10, 2005, complaint investigation found violations of the Adult Foster Care Facility Licensing Act and/or adult foster care family home promulgated rules requiring "emergency action" under the Michigan Administrative Procedures Act, MCL 24.292(2).

Effective 6:00 p.m., August 12, 2005, the Summary Suspension Order prohibits Margaret Garrison from operating an adult foster care family home at 991 Carter, Linwood, Michigan or at any other address or location. Accordingly, she may not accept physically handicapped, developmentally disabled, mentally ill and aged adults for care after that date and time. The order also requires Ms. Garrison to inform all of the guardians of adults in her care that her license has been suspended and that she can no longer provide adult foster care.

Ms. Garrison has held a license to operate an adult foster care family home since August 15, 1991. The license was for six adults.

Michigan law defines an adult foster care family home "as a private residence with the approved capacity to receive six or fewer adults to be provided with foster care for five or more days a week and for two or more consecutive weeks. The adult foster care family home licensee shall be a member of the household, and an occupant of the residence."

For more information, consult DHS website at www.michigan.gov/dhs.

Published August 14, 2005

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: BREAKING THE CYCLE, Woman tells others: 'You don't have to live in pain'

Victim of abuse spreads hope by sharing her story

By Tracy Burton
Lansing State Journal

The fear that once plagued Patricia Oviedo's dark brown eyes has disappeared.

Today, she holds her head high. Her voice carries laughter. She exudes confidence and strength.

And she's helping battered women in ways she doesn't yet fully realize.

Just three years ago, Oviedo was running barefoot in the snow from her north Lansing home, screaming for help after she'd escaped a nearly four-hour beating from her boyfriend.

That winter morning would be the last time his hands hurt her. She still deals with the emotional pain each day.

For years, she endured countless beatings. Oviedo barely looked up then, much less said what she was feeling.

She masked her bruises with makeup and extra clothing - and she kept her pain far from family, friends and co-workers.

"That's who I was before. ... Whoa, I missed me," Oviedo, 39, said with a smile on a recent afternoon at the Lansing Mall.

When Oviedo told her story of abuse last year, it motivated leaders in the field to work even harder. Her story brought hope to women in abusive relationships, and it ultimately helped Oviedo define who she is today: a survivor.

Ripple effect

Tonya Avery, coordinator of the Ingham County Personal Protection Order Office, recalled what went on in her office the day after Oviedo's story ran in the Lansing State Journal.

One woman said she saw her daughter in the story and wanted to know what help was available. Other women said it helped them finally leave.

To get help

If you're being abused, you may call:

- EVE's House (Ingham County): 372-5572

- MSU Safe Place: 355-1100

- RAVE (Clinton and Shiawassee counties): (989) 224-7283

- SIREN (Eaton County): 543-0748

- National Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 799-SAFE

- Or read "A Survivor's Handbook," which tells how to get a personal protection order: www.ingham.org/PA/html/dv.htm

"She was a force for a lot of individuals to take the step from being a victim to becoming a survivor," Avery said. "And it opened up a channel in the community to talk about the challenges and barriers that domestic violence survivors face."

In the past year, Oviedo has told her story to hundreds of women on college campuses and in community support groups.

Most recently, she's worked with state agencies to snag a \$125,000 grant that will help battered immigrant women.

After reading Oviedo's story, Debi Cain, the executive director of the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board, invited her to meet other advocates around the state to talk about challenges in the system.

"I really admire her desire to take her own experience and use it to help other people," Cain said. "She's got a true spirit of generosity."

A new challenge

Oviedo had to put a scholarship to study social work at the University of Michigan on hold after she was diagnosed with lupus in March.

The autoimmune disorder can affect many organ systems, including the skin, joints and internal organs.

She writes it off as just another thing she will have to deal with. "God never puts more on my plate than I can handle," she said.

Oviedo moved from Lansing to Detroit and still holds her position as director of constituent relations for state Rep. Steve Tobocman, D-Detroit.

An Ingham County judge eventually put her boyfriend, Conrado Gonzalez, away for 20 to 40 years - exceeding the sentencing guidelines because of "brutality." He was convicted of assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder.

Gonzalez lost his fight for an appeal in June.

Oviedo's three daughters witnessed many of the beatings. Gonzalez is the father of the two youngest girls - Daniella, now 7 and Julia, 8. Her oldest daughter Patty, 20, is a junior at the University of Michigan majoring in women's studies.

Oviedo still attends therapy, and her daughters are in counseling. "I am able to sleep nights," she said. "I'm more secure in my surroundings."

Carrying the message

Despite the pain and extreme fatigue that come with lupus, Oviedo continues her biggest fight. And she'll yell her message over and over and over, she said: You don't have to live in fear; you don't have to live in pain; you deserve better.

It took Oviedo time to realize that, and it almost cost her life.

"It was like I was in a fog," she recalled. "You don't know unless you've been there."

She knows the road ahead is one she'll travel for some time.

"It took seven years to realize I was lost," she said. "It's going to take me a little while longer to realize I'm back."

Contact Tracy Burton at 377-1206 or tburton@lsj.com.

Protecting Kids

State to offer child support amnesty program

The Detroit Free Press

August 13, 2005

Child support scofflaws need to pay attention. A onetime amnesty program in the fall may make it well worth their while to figure out how to make amends on what they owe.

The program, which runs from Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, will end the fear of enforcement.

In the case of the biggest offenders, that can come in the form of Attorney General Mike Cox making a public show of their inadequacy and shaming them for the flagrant disregard they've shown their children. But even those involved in lesser cases can be subject to arrest when they least expect it, maybe even during a routine traffic stop.

Hundreds of thousands of parents owe back child support in this state, including 270,000 who are making no effort to catch up. The total amount owed to children in Michigan comes to \$8.6 billion, although some of that is debt so old it probably never can be collected.

The more people who take the opportunity to make things right for their children, the better off the state will be overall. Some of the damage caused by deadbeat parents rebounds on the state, if those children end up covered by welfare and Medicaid as a result of parents' failure to pay.

And, as Marilyn Stephen of the Department of Human Services pointed out in a Free Press report last week, child support dollars circulate quickly through the economy -- for food, rent, clothes, school supplies and other family essentials.

This amnesty program won't work for everyone, but many deadbeat parents could find that taking out a loan or making other budget adjustments between now and the end of the year will reap them the rewards of a clear conscience and a cleaned-up record. As soon as they file for amnesty, with a payment equaling at least half their balance, they will no longer face potential criminal or civil charges. Full payment must be completed by Dec. 31.

More information is available by phone at 1-866-540-0008 or online at

www.michigan.gov/dhs, where the amnesty form can also be downloaded.

Thousands of parents ought to find this a reasonable way to keep faith with their children and sleep better at night.

One charge against ex-Lions player Blades dismissed

8/11/2005, 7:33 p.m. ET

The Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — A charge filed against former Lions defensive back Bennie Blades after he failed to attend a hearing in a child support case has been dismissed, an Attorney General's office spokeswoman said.

Blades was arrested Feb. 17 in Broward County, Fla., after missing the Jan. 7 hearing. On Monday, a charge related to missing the hearing was dismissed without prejudice, meaning it could be refiled, said Allison Pierce, spokeswoman for Attorney General Mike Cox.

Blades next faces a Sept. 20 sentencing hearing in the child support case, Pierce said.

He pleaded guilty in August to failing to pay child support. The felony carries a maximum four-year sentence, but the court agreed to delay sentencing until it determined whether he complied with his plea agreement to pay off the owed support.

At one time, Blades owed nearly \$300,000 in child support to the mother of a young girl, according to Cox's office. The girl is one of at least six children Blades has with six different women.

If Blades meets the terms of the plea agreement, the plea was expected to be withdrawn and the charge would be dismissed.

Blades joined the Lions in 1988 and played nine seasons in Detroit before Seattle signed him in 1997. After the Seahawks released him the following year, he moved to Plantation, Fla., where he worked as a substitute teacher.

Bench warrants issued for nonpayment of child support

Name	Age	Address	Amount of arrears
Ingham County			
Ab Abbott, Elijah	30	Onondaga	\$2,191.39
Abbott, Elijah	30	Onondaga	\$7,449.91
Adams, Bobby	48	Dallas, Texas	\$6,429.52
Aikens, Yalanda	26	Lansing	\$16,542.05
Allen, Barbara	36	Pleasant Lake	\$3,732.83
Anteau, Russell	40	Grand Rapids	\$8,709.03
Birmingham, Gary	37	Lansing	\$94,811.61
Blakney, James	54	Laingsburg	\$1,973.74
Bosse, Daniel	43	Lansing	\$65,488.29
Bozung, Ronald	25	Lansing	\$1,588.32
Bunting, David	33	Leslie	\$11,117.21
Bush, Samuel	27	Lansing	\$11,322.98
Carpenter, James	39	Pinckney	\$5,802.80
Clark, Donald	37	Lake City	\$8,112.20
Clements, Michael	51	Lansing	\$16,367.40
Cocking, Christian	41	Iron Mountain	\$24,047.63
Cooper, Anthony	31	Lansing	\$31,301.72
Cooper, Anthony	31	Lansing	\$4,283.73
Cooper, Anthony	31	Lansing	\$8,739.96
Di Diaz, Pasqual	27	Lansing	\$469.80
Dobson, Jeffery	39	Lansing	\$23,867.93
Donald, Jessie	26	Saginaw	\$13,834.36
Doss, Christopher	23	East Lansing	\$715.56
Duncan, Frankie	24	Lansing	\$7,992.26
Dungey, Crystal	32	Detroit	\$565.46
Embry, Wayne	27	Lansing	\$4,556.27
Flores, Vincent	32	Bath	\$1,182.78
Ford, Curtis	34	Lansing	\$20,451.55

Name	Age	Address	Amount of arrears
Funches, Romaine	29	Lansing	\$2,790.42
Gadson, Jimmy	39	Salina, Kan.	\$1,170.29
Garcia, Henry	40	Lansing	\$25,201.85
Garcia, Henry	40	Lansing	\$64,493.73
Garcia, Henry	40	Lansing	\$5,724.48
Gelispie, Kevin	42	East Lansing	\$54,412.69
Gray, Charles	50	Lansing	\$21,267.05
Halme, Raymond	62	St. Petersburg, Fla.	\$21,375.28
Hamilton, John	40	Holt	\$636.89
Harnish, Robert	42	Lansing	\$13,988.18
Harris, Neal	47	Lansing	\$21,534.85
Heath, Bradley	35	Concord	\$2,815.06
Henderson, Mitchell	35	Eagle	\$3,412.22
Horvath, Robert	40	Lansing	\$70,950.00
Iv Ivy, Kenny	40	Lansing	\$18,754.08
Jackson, Richard aka Ricardo	33	Detroit	\$3,927.14
Johnson, Cordual	25	Lansing	\$12,297.36
Johnson, Cordual	25	Lansing	\$12,301.81
Johnson, Cordual	25	Lansing	\$8,545.12
Keeling, Robert	30	Riverdale	\$7,569.26
LaClear, Michael	32	Jackson	\$4,396.32
Lahti, Michelle	30	DeWitt	\$21,641.26
Leach, Brian	38	East Lansing	\$10,707.97
Leppien, David	36	Lansing	\$14,129.68
Lopez, Antoinette	29	Lansing	\$5,540.90
Lynn, Michael	23	Lansing	\$17,192.58
May, Michael	33	Lansing	\$11,134.89
Maynard, Jason	24	Holt	\$9,306.07
Mullins, Brandalyn	22	Lansing	\$468.51
Murray, Stephen	45	Lansing	\$16,755.27

Name	Age	Address	Amount of arrears
Pa Norwood, John	38	East Lansing	\$1,590.84
Numikoski, David	37	Bay Point, Calif.	\$5,696.82
Ogorman, Kenneth	35	DeWitt	\$2,741.26
Oliver, Daryl	31	Lansing	\$4,416.57
Patterson, Don	38	Lansing	\$18,134.52
Pelland, Andre	44	Ashley	\$1,389.01
Pierre, Nathanael	29	Wyoming	\$19,435.26
Price, Thomas	37	Lansing	\$11,061.97
Reed, Alice	25	Eaton Rapids	\$6,017.41
Rees, Blake	52	Mason	\$9,765.36
Rentschler, Benny	28	Miles City, Mont.	\$16,327.95
Reyna, Felix	25	Mason	\$13,962.83
Richardson, Tommy	25	Lansing	\$13,562.88
Salas, Carlos	27	Lansing	\$12,677.47
Sanchez, Daniel	33	Lansing	\$1,925.99
Sherman, Billie	48	Saginaw	\$5,091.39
Smith, Charles	23	Hastings	\$10,014.40
Smith, Jonathan	29	Lansing	\$1,263.50
Spagnuolo, Andrew	28	Lansing	\$728.00
Stambersky, Laurance	47	Elsie	\$46,415.71
Stanley, Kerry	42	Lansing	\$10,956.49
Stebbleton, Lisa	36	Charlotte	\$593.34
Stebbleton, Lisa	36	Charlotte	\$591.82
Stebbleton, Lisa	36	Charlotte	\$598.62
Summerville, Darryl	35	Lansing	\$19,204.91
Tenney, Matthew	27	East Lansing	\$7,626.69
Volkman, Douglas	56	Lansing	\$5,279.84
Wallace, Danny	34	Lansing	\$9,303.08
Wallace, Danny	34	Lansing	\$11,917.87
Walls, Frazier	44	Lansing	\$5,194.55

Name	Age	Address	Amount of arrears
Walls, Frazier	44	Lansing	\$30,305.96
Ware, Gary	46	Detroit	\$8,379.92
Ware, Gary	46	Detroit	\$19,618.55
Washington, Broderick	49	Flint	\$20,404.15
Webb, Anton	37	Lansing	\$23,977.79
White, Lee	24	Lansing	\$2,903.00
Williams, Richard	32	East Lansing	\$1,052.00
Wilson, Charlie	20	Lansing	\$4,073.32
Woodard, Todd	32	Lansing	\$9,883.84
Woods, Charles	34	Grand Rapids	\$22,392.63

Eaton County

Name	Age	Address	Amount of arrears
Cary, Shane E.	32	Vermontville	\$3,413.80
Gillison, Michael L. Sr.	52	Lansing	\$12,699.72
Goodrich, John R.	35	Charlotte	\$6,085.11
Goodrich, John R.	35	Charlotte	\$4,678.18
Harmon, Steven M.	36	Jackson	\$19,543.44
Holley, Lester B. IV	35		\$10,135.62
Holley, Lester B. IV	35		\$40,959.78
Howard, Allen L.	33	Sheridan	\$5,374.10
Kositzke, Matthew D.	29	Lansing	\$21,564.46
Lashley, Derrick	37	Charlotte	\$12,118.51
Linn, Chad J.	28	Nashville	\$6,065.01
Marchant, Gregory E.	42	Dimondale	\$17,165.74
Newell, Daryl D. Jr.	27	Lansing	\$470.21
Norton, George E. Jr.	36	Rives Junction	\$9,658.24
Saylor, Rodney H.	35	Eaton Rapids	\$17,975.18
Wright, Joel S.	45	Lake Odessa	\$10,308.15

Troubled youths making sculpture

Sunday, August 14, 2005

CATHY HEN

FOR THE SAGINAW NEWS

MIDLAND -- Juvenile Care Center day students will get an up-close look at the legal system while they prepare a bronze sculpture for Midland County Probate Court.

A \$50,000 grant for the artwork from the H.H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation will pay for the project, said Probate Judge Dorene Allen.

"The students will study the Michigan Supreme Court and Court of Appeals as well as local courts to create a sculpture based on the theme American justice," she said.

The students will work for nine to 12 months with Midland Public Schools Art Coordinator Mark Francisco and Dow High School art teacher Carol Lewin, starting when classes begin.

The court also will cooperate with the Midland-based Legacy Center for Student Success to test the students before and after to gauge the benefit of the hands-on work.

"We are looking for feedback -- the impact on the kids," Allen said.

Juvenile ward study

Other projects also might spin off a nine-month study of Midland County Juvenile Court wards by the Midland County Probate and Family Court and the Legacy Center.

The students in the project report to the courts because of brushes with the law.

Researchers surveyed 93 students in April at various venues in Midland and compiled results in a 16-page report, said Richard Dolinski, Legacy Center president. Results are compared to national findings.

CONTINUE

Troubled youths making sculpture

Page 2 of 2

The county's juvenile wards amount to 5 percent of the area student population, Allen said, "but the amount of money spent on that 5 percent is significant. We need to look at prevention so they don't show up in the system."

Survey says

Here are some results:

At Midland students said parents generally are involved in their schools, but they did not feel they lived in caring neighborhoods.

In their constructive use of time, Midland students fell below the national findings in time at home, time with the religious community and youth activities. Fifth-two percent lacked experience and exposure to creative and artistic endeavors, in part prompting the sculpture project.

"Midland court wards do not do their homework, and many do no reading for pleasure," Dolinski said.

The Midland wards scored better than the national average in time spent home alone and overexposure to television; physical abuse, being a victim of violence and drinking parties ranked worse.

Risky business

"Risk-taking behaviors were significantly higher than the national sample in all categories -- sexual activity, substance abuse and truancy," Dolinski said.

He said 33 of the 93 students reported getting drunk in the past two weeks, and many had ridden once or more in the past 12 months with a driver who was drinking. The survey uncovered higher than normal reported problems with skipping school, three or more incidents of violent behavior, sexual intercourse three or more times in their lives and illicit drug use.

Midland's wards landed lower than the national average in six of the eight "positive" indicators, such as overcoming adversity and maintaining good health.

The top external asset for Midland youths was family support, cited by 58 percent compared to 64 percent nationally. The top internal asset was a positive view of a personal future, cited by 66 percent of Midland youths compared to 70 percent nationally.

Dolinski said gaps for the wards exist because of little support through intergenerational relationships, a lack of opportunities for leadership, disengagement from youth activities, disconnection from the community and incomplete formation of social competency and positive values.

Cathy Heng covers Midland County for The Saginaw News. You may reach her at 776-9675.

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Michigan Report

August 12, 2005

PARTNERSHIP IDENTIFIES, FILLS JOB VACANCIES

The MI Opportunity Partnership has identified 19,041 job vacancies and has placed 6,266 citizens in jobs across the state since the spring, Governor Jennifer Granholm said Friday in her weekly radio address.

The partnership is part of Ms. Granholm's five-point plan to create jobs, restructure the state economy, change the business tax structure and expand access to higher education. She said the partnership will put 30,000 state residents to work by matching them with existing job opportunities; currently, there are 90,000 job vacancies in high-demand fields such as health care.

Ms. Granholm's weekly address is released Fridays at 10 a.m. and can be heard across the state on any station affiliated with the Michigan Association of Broadcasters. The address is also available Mondays as a podcast for distribution to personal MP3 players and computers.

August 13, 2005

Grant will help people find jobs

FROM STAFF REPORTS

TRAVERSE CITY - Federal funds to help low-income residents find jobs are headed to the regional Michigan Works! employment agency.

The Northwest Michigan Council of Governments is getting \$52,636 from the federal Work First program, which offers job placement help to low-income residents find work or upgrade their employment.

The local grant is part of more than \$3.8 million being split among 25 agencies in Michigan by the state Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

Published August 13, 2005

Eaton judge orders lawyer to repay \$347,000 to estate Court-appointed guardian missing, as is money from woman's account

By Kelly Hassett
Lansing State Journal

CHARLOTTE - An Eaton County judge has signed an arrest warrant for former court guardian Charles M. Zwick and ordered him to repay more than \$347,000 in missing funds to the estate of a deceased Lansing woman. But the family of Wilma Southwell may be forced to put liens on Zwick's property and assets before they see any of the money because he hasn't been seen nor heard in weeks, county officials said.

Zwick, 56, of Charlotte, failed to show at a July 22 probate court hearing when the family's attorney, Philip Vilella, accused the former court-appointed guardian of closing several bank accounts belonging to 92-year-old Southwell, who had Alzheimer's disease.

Eaton County's new court guardian and authorities are reviewing Zwick's old cases for other irregularities.

Calls to Zwick's house and office seeking comment were not answered, and messages were not returned.

Judge Michael Skinner signed the judgment Tuesday after giving Zwick - who hasn't been seen in court since mid-July - a week to answer or object to the claim, which he did not.

Skinner signed the warrant for failure to appear and a breach of fiduciary duty Wednesday, court officials said.

"The next step is to try to collect on that judgment," said Mike Kutas, administrator for Eaton County circuit and probate court.

"This is made unusual by the fact that (Zwick's) not available."

As Eaton County court guardian, Zwick was charged with managing the finances of people who are unable to do so because of medical, physical or other conditions.

Many of those people receive Social Security benefits or Medicaid, and it's the guardian's responsibility to file regular inventory reports with the court, Kutas said.

As of June, the longtime Eaton County attorney was delinquent in filing reports on about 32 of the roughly 157 cases he handled, Kutas said.

Vilella, who did not return a phone call Friday, has said he turned over all of his evidence to the Eaton County prosecutor's office.

No criminal charges had been filed against Zwick as of Friday.

When asked about Zwick, Eaton County Prosecutor Jeffrey Sauter said there's a multi-agency investigation in progress.

What's next

- The family of Wilma Southwell has the option of putting liens on the property and assets of former Eaton County court guardian Charles M. Zwick in an attempt to collect the more than \$347,000 judgment against him.

Sauter couldn't name Zwick as the target of the investigation or say what the case is about. Meanwhile, Eaton County officials appointed attorney Christine Waichunas to take over all of Zwick's old cases.

"We are in contact with a great number of these clients while we try to figure out what their financial situations are," she said Friday.

Waichunas is working with several police agencies and prosecutors in reviewing Zwick's cases, she said.

"We're trying to figure out where funds went and were they (accounted for) appropriately," Waichunas said.

The allegations in Vilella's filing include:

- Starting in 2001, Zwick closed several of Southwell's bank accounts and never explained why they were closed or how the money was used.
- Zwick never accounted for Southwell's car; instead, he sold it and listed it as income.
- Although Zwick said he paid personal income taxes for Southwell, he had no proof of filing 2002 or 2003 returns.

Contact Kelly Hassett at 267-1301 or khassett@lsj.com.

New information available to parents

Monday, August 15, 2005

FROM LOCAL REPORTS

Free child development literature, tips and advice are available to parents of newborns, toddlers and preschoolers.

The information includes a locally produced "Grow with Me" booklet that provides tips, resources and places to record developmental milestones through age 6 and "Born Learning" materials that provide developmental tips as well as advice on creating early learning opportunities for children.

The free materials -- including Born Learning materials appropriate for children through age 5 -- will be available to the general public from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday and Friday at Hackley Hospital's Family Birth Place, 1700 Clinton, Mercy General Health Partners' Special Delivery Birthing Center, 1700 Oak, and the United Way of Muskegon County, 313 W. Webster.

After that, the materials will be available at the United Way and the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District, 630 Harvey.

The effort is the result of a partnership among the United Way, the MAISD and local hospitals. The materials provide a wide range of information, including ideas for games, books and songs; recommendations for dental and medical checkups; and tips about sleep, nutrition and childhood physical, intellectual and emotional growth.

All materials will be available in English and Spanish.

The Grow with Me booklet also will be included in child development kits currently given out to parents of newborns at both hospitals.

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211 service may join state network

Information and referral hotline loses United Way funding

By JOHN BURDICK Staff writer

Monday, August 15, 2005

Holland Sentinel

Ottawa County 211 is looking into joining a proposed statewide network.

"There's a state planning process under way to look at regional possibilities," said Sherry Miller, director of Ottawa County 211.

If it happens, Ottawa County 211 would likely merge into a regional 211 network that would service West Michigan.

Ottawa County 211 is a non-emergency referral service. It provides information and referrals to help people get emergency shelter, food, help with their rent and utility payments, counseling, clothing and lets them know about job training and assistance, senior programs and substance abuse services.

Only five of Michigan's 83 counties now have 211 call centers, but more are in the works. In a year or two, it's possible to have the whole state covered.

"We're working collectively statewide on a plan so every county can receive 211 service," said Nancy Lindman, statewide director of 211. "There's a commitment to move in that direction, but there's been no determination made on how that would look."

Currently, 211 call centers operate in Ottawa, Kent, Kalamazoo, Calhoun and Jackson counties. Ottawa County 211 received 7,976 calls in 2004.

Ottawa County 211 received a setback last month when its proposal to enter into a contractual agreement with the Greater Ottawa County United Way was rejected.

Ottawa County 211 made the request to enter into a contractual agreement after a United Way community investments panel recommended 211 not receive any funding.

Miller said her agency received \$84,000 in 2004 and \$7,000 in January from the United Way. It's a major part of its \$168,000 annual budget. The money didn't come from the allocation process, but was paid out of a reserve fund.

"We're certainly disappointed the United Way has stopped providing funding," Miller said. "We continue to believe strongly in the value of 211 to our community. "

United Way officials said the volunteer allocations panel recommended denying funding because 211 doesn't provide direct services to clients.

Other reasons for denial dealt with budget issues and the financial stability of 211.

After the denial, Ottawa County 211 requested to enter into a contract for services with United Way. The United Way board rejected the offer last month.

"We don't do it with anyone else and we didn't want to start that precedent," said Thomas Vander Hulst, secretary to the United Way board. "We feel we did our due diligence. We helped them along for more than a year."

Contact John Burdick at john.burdick@hollandsentinel.com or (616) 546-4275.

Backpack giveaway planned for Friday

Sunday, August 14, 2005

se@kalamazoogazette.com 388-8554

If the back-to-school commercials and other promos aren't enough to signal to parents and children that the end of summer is near, consider the backpack giveaways being planned.

The Family Health Center and Kalamazoo Deacons Conference are again giving away backpacks at the second annual ``Back to School Bash" from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday at LaCrone Park, 535 W. Paterson.

Backpacks will be given to parents who pre-register the need and who show up with a valid Social Security number for each child receiving a backpack.

In addition to the backpack giveaway, there will be health screenings, on-site immunizations, school supplies, food entertainment, games and other activities.

A host of area organizations collaborated on this year's backpack giveaway drive, according to Ken Bizzell, office manager at the Kalamazoo Deacons Conference.

``We're organized," Bizzell said of the collaborations. ``And being one of the hubs of the community, we're in contact with so many people, so many organizations, so for everyone not to reinvent the wheel, everyone decided to become a spoke and with all the spokes, we'll become one huge wheel, and we'll touch many more people and families.

``Last year we gave in excess of 550," Bizzell said. ``We will far exceed that."

Participating organizations include Health Plan of Michigan, Community Choice of Michigan, Kalamazoo Public Schools, Communities in Schools, Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety, Black Police Officers Association, Family Health Center, Kalamazoo Junior Girls, Wal-Mart Vision and Screening, Kalamazoo Safe Kids Coalition, Northside Ministerial Alliance, Kalamazoo County Human Services, Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Community Choice Health Plan of Michigan, and Physicians Health Plan of Michigan.

Also on hand will be mascots from the Kalamazoo Kings, Chuck E. Cheese, Old Country Buffet and Felpaush.

For more information, contact Family Health Center at 349-2641 or Kalamazoo Deacons Conference at 344-7333.

Saturday, August 13, 2005 10:05 PM EDT

Director's goal is increased service

By Andrea Yeutter

Adrian Daily Telegram Staff Writer

Paula Trentman says she gets a thrill out of helping others. On Monday, Trentman assumed the role of executive director for the Associated Charities of Lenawee County after the retirement of Mary Ann Dalgard, Associated Charities executive director for 17 years.

Before taking this position, Trentman worked in the Volunteer Center of Lenawee United Way for four years. She spoke with The Daily Telegram about the goals she hopes to accomplish.

Q: What does Associated Charities do?

A: Associated Charities provides household items and clothing to Lenawee County residents. Right now we're getting ready for our back to school program, which provides clothing, shoes and a backpack filled with school supplies to each child.

Q: What do your responsibilities entail as executive director of Associated Charities?

A: Overall management of the program and staff, as well as fund raising, presentations and programs. It's a little bit of everything.

Q: Why did you decide to accept this position?

A: It's a new challenge for me. It was an exciting opportunity, and it was time. It's a great responsibility and an honor to be chosen.

Q: What goals do you hope to help Associated Charities accomplish under your leadership?

A: I hope that we are able to increase the number of people we serve, to increase the number of dollars received, and to increase the endowment. Associated Charities has been in Lenawee County since 1912, and we want to continue the programs and grow what we do.

Q: What challenges and obstacles will you face?

A: There are more people needing assistance now, due to the economy, and less dollars to do that with. The board and I will sit down and work on planning and fund-raising ideas. We have a great board; Delight Creech is the president and she's been wonderful.

Q: What do you like about living in Lenawee County?

A: I like the community. It's a great place to raise children. It has great people, and you have the benefit of the big city with the friendliness of a small town.

Q: What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

A: I coach soccer at the YMCA, I scrapbook, I volunteer at different organizations - I just like being involved. I also work with Lenawee Youth Council through the Lenawee Community Foundation.

Vickie S. Nimmo

COLDWATER — Vickie S. Nimmo, age 53, of Coldwater, died on Saturday, Aug. 13, 2005 at the Community Health Center of Branch County.

Vickie was born on Feb. 7, 1952 in Vicksburg, to Robert and Beverly (Miller) Nimmo.

Vickie married James Beougher on June 21, 1985 in Fitzwilliam, N.H., and he survives.

Vickie came to Coldwater in 1987 from the Kalamazoo/Vicksburg area. She graduated from Central Michigan University and received her master's degree from Western Michigan University in 1996.

Vickie had been a social worker for the State of Michigan for 29 years, spending the last 12 at the Department of Social Services in Branch, Hillsdale and St. Joseph counties.

Vickie was recognized for her dedication to vulnerable children and the parents, relatives, foster and adoptive parents who cared for them. In her work, she met the highest standards and always sought to do even better. Among those known to be good at their work, Vickie was recognized as being among the best. Vickie enjoyed reading, traveling and shopping. She was very dedicated to her family and especially loved spending time with her granddaughters.

In addition to her husband, Jim Beougher, she is survived by stepchildren, Dawn and Karl Aldag of Atlanta, Ga., and Mark Beougher of Kalamazoo; parents, Robert and Beverly Nimmo of Vicksburg; brother, Jim and Donna Nimmo of Vicksburg; sister, Diane and Doug Fox of Wyoming; and grandchildren, Glenna Aldag and Claire Beougher.

Visitation will be held on Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2005 from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Dutcher Funeral Home.

The service will be held on Wednesday, Aug. 17, 2005 at 11 a.m. at the Dutcher Funeral Home.

Interment will take place on Thursday, Aug. 18 at 10 a.m. at the Schoolcraft Township Cemetery in Vicksburg.

Memorials may be directed to CHC Home Health and Hospice or the West Michigan Cancer Center.

Please visit www.dutcherfh.com to share a memory in the family's online guestbook.

Arrangements are being handled by the Dutcher Funeral Home, Coldwater.